

I am writing to comment on rule changes regarding media ownership. Although I am an individual citizen, I believe I speak for many of my friends and colleagues who will likely not write when I say that relaxation of the media ownership regulations in the last decade has hurt this country, and limited the ability of ordinary citizens to express their ideas. I do not believe that a communications policy that places market forces at the top of its list of motivations can ever truly serve the public interest, and would recommend tightening of restrictions on ownership of multiple media outlets.

It is now possible to drive across the country, hopping from one Westwood One or Clear Channel radio station and hear the same format, same patter, same limited playlist, same commercials, same 30 second newsbytes, and the same plugs from TV or movie personalities. The idea that these megastations are acting as a public trust seems lost – 30 second PSAs on teen pregnancy don't suffice. While it is certainly possible to tune in to local public radio or college stations to hear alternative content, most alternatives in commercial radio have also been lost, and as such, most messages that are not profitmaking such as new music, much news reporting, and local and national political debate are also lost.

It is also true that there are many more access points for people to get media content: broadcast, satellite, and cable TV; print; internet; broadcast and satellite radio... but increasingly the content on all these access point is being controlled by a smaller set of wealthy, influential, commercial entities, who make more money by cutting costs and homogenizing content, and who cannot have the public interest at heart above their own commercial interest in the absence of regulation. One need only look to the killing of a tobacco report on 60 minutes to see that we are in danger of losing meaningful debate on public policy to corporate interest. These same interests oppose low power radio stations that can effectively provide local content without the constraints of a large corporate entity.

I encourage you to consider the implications of using media rules as fiscal policy, and ensure that the airwaves remain a public trust.

Thank you,

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